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AUTHOR Lyon, Philip; Ognibene, Richard
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ABSTRACT

The College of Saint Rose (Albany, New York) initiated a Dean's Grant inservice program for secondary school teachers and administrators to prepare them as master teachers for the college's student teachers who were being trained to deal with mainstreamed students. The group met twice a week for a semester under the guidance of the college faculty. The presentation of the course consisted of lecture and discussion with visual aids, audience participation, and handouts. The pace of the program was designed to be short, active, and varied. The emphasis of the course content was on the practical, comprehensive, and realistic. Besides dealing with the educational needs of handicapped students, a panel presentation by parents of handicapped students brought immediacy and clarity to student problems. A second panel consisted of handicapped adults. Participant responses to a program evaluation were very positive. While the long-range intent of this program was to prepare secondary school teachers to serve as practicum supervisors for preservice teachers, it was also intended to establish a "living laboratory." The preservice students will be placed with program graduates and observed by those involved in their training. These on-site visits and the feedback from the cooperating teachers and the practicum students will provide a test of the revised curriculum. Future inservice programs are planned for training counselors and administrators in dealing with mainstreamed students. (JD)

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TEACHERS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS, AND THE HANDICAPPED: A RETRAINING PROGRAM

Philip Lyon, Ph.D.
The College of Saint Rose
Albany, New York

Richard Ognibene, Ed.D.
The College of Saint Rose
Albany, New York

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BACKGROUND

For the past several years there has been increased discussion and activity in the area of inservice education. Ironically, as this form of professional development is beginning to assume greater importance, a recent federally sponsored teacher education proposal by B.O. Smith argues that inservice education be deemphasized as a mechanism for training teachers.[1] Since less than 20% of America's teachers participate in inservice education, the logic of this suggestion seems questionable.[2] What is needed are more and better inservice opportunities, not less.

New York State is attempting to meet this need as part of a comprehensive series of proposals on "Teaching as a Profession." Among other things, the proposals require each school district to submit an annual inservice education plan, and for the state to assist in the funding of those plans. This specific proposal has an 11 million dollar price tag and is awaiting legislative approval.[3] Unfortunately, while a number of factors have converged to make the need for inservice education compelling, teachers generally reject the efforts of those who traditionally organize and provide such opportunities.[4]

Perhaps no current educational trend compares to the maintreaming movement in its implications for the continuing education of teachers. As the not so subtle title of a recent article suggests, "In-Service Education (is the) Key to PL 94-142's Service to Handicapped Children and Youth."[5] The implementation of mainstreaming has introduced regular classroom teachers to concepts, procedures, and types of students with which they were somewhat unfamiliar. One survey, for example, found that only 15 percent of those teachers felt that they had the skills necessary to help special students in their classroom.[6] Even if they have the skills, it is not always certain that regular teachers will develop the positive attitudes needed to make mainstraming greatly effective.[7] It was in this context of these educational issues that The

College of Saint Rose (CSR) decided to become involved in an inservice project to be conducted in the Fall of 1981.

The College of Saint Rose is located in Albany, New York, and has been involved in teacher education since its founding in 1920. There are currently twenty-three full-time Education faculty at the College out of a full-time faculty that numbers ninety-six. Among the Education faculty, twelve are in Special Education or Communication Disorders. About 45 percent of the 1200 undergraduates at the College major in one of six certification programs, and about 75 percent of the 750 evening graduate students enroll in one of the eleven Education related programs.

The College was awarded "Dean's Grants" by the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (BEH) in 1979-80 and 1980-81 to enable the College to restructure its pre-service teacher education programs to prepare regular classroom teachers to deal with mainstreamed children. A grant for 1981-82 was a continuation of those earlier efforts, except that our target population was no longer our own faculty but area high school teachers whom we hoped would subsequently serve as master teachers for our senior secondary student teachers.

Although the secondary program is the smallest of our Education programs, we elected to work with secondary teachers because of our perception that this population would be the most resistant to inservice activity. Our first task was to interest school districts in our project, and that task was accomplished through two meetings in May of 1981. Six districts accepted our invitation and were represented by either a superintendent or an assistant superintendent, and an additional representative, typically someone connected with pupil personnel services. CSR was represented by the two person grant project staff, two deans, and the head of the Education Division. These May meetings were one of the keys to the success of our subsequent program: they enabled

us to to obtain district support and provided an opportunity for organizational and curricular input that helped structure our inservice ideas. Among our more important learnings from these meetings were: (1) a confirmation of minimal secondary school teacher involvement in district mainstreaming activities; (2) a strongly stated preference for inservice programming that would permit simultaneous faculty and administrative involvement; (3) suggestions about the timing (Friday evening and Saturday) and the length (one) semester) of our program; and (4), several specific program (curriculum) suggestions. After the initial meeting, the CSR Graduate Dean (Ognibene) called to confirm the districts' interest in participating in the project and all districts agreed to do so. The group reconvened for a second meeting to review a tentative program that had been developed in the interim and to devise procedures for the recruitment of program participants. Recruitment was handled by the districts.

The inservice program entitled "Teaching Special Students in Secondary Classrooms" met for three Fridays and four Saturdays from September to December, 1981. As planned, there were 25 members of the group, 22 of whom remained for the entire program. The educational attainment of the group was high: thirteen had masters degrees and several of the nine bachelor's holders had earned more than thirty graduate credits. The twenty-two participants held the following positions in their districts: assistant superintendent (1); principal (2); dean (2); social studies (5); English (2); mathematics (3); art (3); science (1); home economics (1); physical education (1); nurse teacher (1).

The applications teachers submitted for acceptance in the project expressed a common concern about the increasing number of special students in their

classes and their lack of skills in dealing with this relatively new situation. As one ten year teacher wrote: "I am the one who feels handicapped due to a lack of knowledge and experience in this area (mainstreaming)."

The grant staff approached the secondary inservice project with mixed feelings. We had two years worth of experience in delivering programs about handicapped conditions to college faculty and had documented evidence of curricular change, program revision, and positive attitudinal change to show for our efforts[8]. But in some ways the secondary group would be more difficult: unlike most college faculty, this group had heard Education professors before, and we assumed that those memories were not always pleasant ones. If consultation with school district officials enabled us to get the project going, it would be the quality of the programs that would determine whether participants would remain.

THE INSERVICE PROGRAM

Our two year experience in providing programs about handicapping conditions to college faculty served as the primary resource in our planning for the "teacher-administrator" group. Examination of the evaluative comments of the previous groups showed us that there were three areas that had to be addressed: (1) presentation, (2) personnel, and (3) pace. Each of these had to be considered in every session and be related to the fourth item, (4) content.

The first area to be addressed was presentation. Past experiences with the grant, as well as with our graduate education programs, clearly indicated that straight lecture with the "expert" disseminating information was not an approach that would be well received. It would be necessary to vary the methods of presentation, melding lecture and discussion and using visual aides and audience participation whenever possible. Another important

aspect of the presentation would be the use of handouts. It was felt that any materials which could be given to the participants would serve to enhance the program's effectiveness. Both style of presentation and use of handouts were specifically discussed with the presentors, the second area of concern.

There is a common maxim in higher education circles that anyone can be an expert if they go fifty miles away from their campus and deliver the same lecture which they commonly give in their introductory courses. At Saint Rose, we had relied on a series of consultants and experts in the past two years of our grant and they had done an outstanding job for us. Since the intent of the program was to prepare teachers to work with secondary education students from Saint Rose, the Dean's Grant Staff believed that the faculty of Saint Rose should serve as the main "faculty" for these sessions. It was also felt that for a few parts of the program that non-Saint Rose personnel be used. For example, a representative from the New York State Education Department spoke on competency tests in New York State. Participant reaction to the Saint Rose personnel was overwhelmingly positive (Appendix A). When selecting the presentors, the Dean's Grant staff decided that the presentors from Saint Rose would have to have had recent experience in the public schools. The hope was that this would make their presentations realistic and useful to the audience.

In regard to program pacing, the audience also was the prime consideration. Success here would hold the audience's interest. The pace was designed to be short, active, and varied. Whether or not the specifications for pace could be met depended upon the content.

The content of the program had to be practical, sufficiently comprehensive, and realistic. Theory was not the prime concern of the audience. They expressed interest in knowing "what works." In addition, the participants wanted to share their own experiences, find solutions to individual problems, and were anxious to assist in making the curriculum at Saint Rose more relevant.

The range and variety of topics are presented in Appendix B. Twenty-one different presentors covered seventeen different topics, which were arranged around a framework of theory, instruction and evaluation. Besides content which dealt with the educational needs of handicapped students, a second area which the Grant focused on was the parents of these students. This area was of vital importance since PL 94-142 requires that parents be actively involved in their children's educacion. The participants found this section of the program to be extremely useful and practical. One of the more exciting facets of this program was a panel presentation by two parents of students who are handicapped. These parents are also professional advocates for the State.

Past experience lead us to include a second panel in our program. This panel consisted of handicapped adults. The group shared with the audience their personal feelings in relation to their handicap, the reactions of people to them, and the social, educational, and emotional barriers they had encountered as children, as adolescents, and were still meeting in their adulthood. The candor and naturalness of this panel offorded the audience an opportunity to ask questions which they might never raise in other situations. One question will clearly illustrate this. "Did you blame your parents for your handicap?" The responses to this and other similar

probing questions helped to dispel many myths which the audience held regarding persons with handicapping conditions.

In the program which has been described, there are four elements which were combined. Each of these parts are interrelated and should be considered in program planning. The success of a program can be traced to the manner in which the elements were combined so that the pace, personnel, participants, and content complemented each other.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

An evaluation form was sent to the home address of all 22 participants after the sixth of the seven scheduled workshop sessions. Eighteen forms or 82% were returned, 13 signed, 5 unsigned. Participants were asked to rate all sixteen presentations made in the sessions to that point by checking whether each topic presented was covered "effectively," "satisfactorily," or "inadequately." There were 277 (out of a possible 288) ratings as follows: 155 or 56% were checked as having been covered "effectively;" 106 or 38% were checked as having been covered "satisfactorily;" and 16 or 6% were checked as having been covered "inadequately." Put another way, 94% of all the ratings indicated that the workshop presentations were satisfactory or better.

The final question on the evaluation form raised an issue that had not been part of any formal or informal discussion held during the workshop. The question related to future inservice possibilities:

> Based on your experience in this program, if your school or school district were to plan a course of series of inservice workshops on topics of current interest to teachers, would you recommend that The College of Saint Rose be contacted as a possible provider of that inservice course or workshop? Please explain why you would or would not recommend us (If you comment positively here, we do not intend to contact your school. This question is for our information only.)

The responses were very positive: seventeen of eighteen respondents responded

affirmatively to the question. The eighteenth reponse was not a negative one but expressed a hesitation to bring any "outsider" into the school to deal with the issue of special children because of some recent controversy in the school district. The point is that the participants were impressed enough by the program and our personnel to consider us as potentially valuable resources for the future. Rather than sample a few of their laudatory responses, we have presented them fully in appendix A.

Recent literature on inservice education suggests that the real payoff from the kind of program we offered comes after teachers become acutely aware of a problem, gain knowledge about needed changes because of the problem, and then develop the skills to carry out those changes in a classroom.[9] A similar perspective has been called "a levels of involvement approach to inservice training." This approach suggests that inservice should be organized either to meet short or long term general needs (levels 1 and 2), or specific needs of individual teachers (level 3).[10] Our Fall, 1981 inservice project was clearly an increasing awareness and knowledge (i.e. level 2) oriented project, but the results will provide the basis for our planned level 3 involvement with selected teachers in specific districts. We will, as the title of a recent book suggests, move toward "school focused inservice."

FUTURE PLANS

One of the more devastating and less productive aspects of any program which provides training to teachers inservice is the lack of follow up. Hall describes ten possible implementation strategies for providing inservice and the major criticisms inherent in these approaches are the lack of commitment and follow-up.[11] The program at Saint Rose was designed to overcome

this problem. In fact, follow-up was part of the original planning and the core of the program.

The intent of the program was to prepare teachers to serve as practicum supervisors for our preservice teachers as well as to establish a "living laboratory." This laboratory would provide our preservice teachers with an opportunity to actualize their classroom experiences. Most particularly, the manner in which these students deal with mainstreamed students would be examined. The preservice students would be placed with "graduates" of the Dean's Grant program and observed by those involved in the training sessions. These on-site visits, the feedback from the cooperating teachers, and the practicum students will provide a "reality test" of the revised curriculum at Saint Rose.

Another manner in which follow-up was to be accomplished was by providing future technical assistance to the cooperating school districts. This assistance will take many forms and is not limited to general visitations and workshop sessions. Several activities are envisioned so that the effect of the workshops will spread more fully through the districts and impact on a greater number of teachers. The major components in the 1982-82 grant, for example, will be providing training sessions to counselors and other administrators.

The intent of these sessions will be similar to that of the programs for teachers. These participants will again serve as reality testers of the curriculum as well as future resources for preservice teachers. We hope that these individuals will be able to provide us with an overview of the impact that mainstreaming has on the system, the problems that have resulted, as well as suggested solutions to these problems. These

solutions will enable us to continue updating and revising our teacher training programs.

Technical assistance or serving as a resource repository is another aspect of our follow-up system. The assistance does not necessarily have to be complicated, but can be quite mundane in that it focuses on real problems and everyday issues. Two examples serve to illustrate this point; providing information regarding adjustments in the competency testing program; and supporting, in part, teacher attendance at a workshop on secondary learning disabilities held in the Spring, 1982, semester.

As part of our future planning and to ensure that our programs are meaningful, we asked participants in this year's program to share their perspectives on the content and organization of effective inservice programs. The participants were divided into three groups and asked to respond to the following question:

> "What, in your opinion, are the ingredients which lead to an effective inservice program, especially for preparing teachers to work with mainstreamed students?"

The groups, although not always reaching consensus, identified several areas or themes as important topics for inservice workshops. Some examples are specifics on disabilities, social living skills, effective use of volunteers, delineation of school and district goals, and, most specifically, communication. There was consensus that the major issue that needed to be addressed was communication. One participant described communication needs at four levels: (1) school-wide, (2) cross-curriculum, (3) individual departments, and (4) individual teachers.

This approach is helpful if one were working only within an individual school or school district. It is, however, restrictive in that the school and teachers are not isolated and others must be and are involved in the edu-

cation of the students with special educational needs. Others felt that teaching teachers and administrators how to effectively communicate with parent advocates, school board members, and the community at large was as important as intraschool communication.

These comments will serve as the bases for our originally planned follow-up with the secondary educators. This report, therefore, can be considered an interim report that conceivably could never be finalized if the program operates as planned. We have described the beginning, the middle, and the future of our program designed to more effectively prepare secondary teachers to work with mainstreamed students. We believe the program is viable and represents an institution's commitment to upgrading its curriculum through interaction with the community at large. Our program can be described as mutual sharing; we share our technical expertise in return for a chance to field test our ideas and thus modify our curricular approaches.

APPENDIX A

RESPONSES TO INSERVICE QUESTION

1. Yes, I would recommend CSR as a possible provider because it is apparent that the faculty is well qualified.

2. Yes! I would recommend CSR as a possible provider. The expertise in the department as I have seen during this course shows depth in knowledge and experience. Your staff has a great deal of information to share with other professionals who are dealing with special students.

3. Definitely. You seem to have a handle on this aspect of education. Your staff is more realistic about approaches etc. than other local schools and colleges I know and you are all so "humanistic" and real.

4. I'm not sure. My district has been reluctant to utilize outside services in the area of special students. It has been slow in reacting to the parent group of special students. I have met with some problems personally in the past and might feel somewhat uncomfortable in dealing with persons in policy making positions.

5. Yes - a fine staff of knowledgeable and professional caring people. Thanks to a great faculty all aspects of the course helped me personally to better "understand" the issues involved in special education.

6. Yes. I think that CSR is very adequately staffed to present a valuable workshop.

7. Yes. I would recommend contacting CSR because teachers in inservice training need to get reliable information and have the opportunity to have questions answered. The faculty of CSR is knowledgeable and seems willing to answer questions/needs of area people.

8. Yes. You have a wealth of experts in various areas of handicapping all under one roof.

9. Yes, Yes, Yes! We may contact you though!

10. Yes if activity #14 (Instructional Strategies for the Secondary Learning Disabled Student) was the thrust of the workshop.

11. Yes. Generally the speakers were knowledgeable and informative. Again I would recommend you go beyond the general survey type information.

12. Yes. I Feel the expertise in the CSR staff is unparalleled in the area.

13. Yes. Your presenters are super!

14. I feel that the _____ School System would greatly benefit from an inservice workshop in L.D.

15. Yes, because I do feel you have a number of qualified and interesting people.

16. Yes. I believe that the workshop was well organized. This particular topic covers too broad a scope and I do think if St. Rose were to plan a workshop on a more specific topic, the good intent and expertise of the staff would make for a successful learning experience.

17. Yes, because of the vast amount of experience and varied background that I have observed demonstrated by the staff members present at the seminar.

18. I would recommend you to plan a workshop. Several people are not "open" to the problems that exist and do not effectively deal with them. The faculty workshop would help to educate and bring the problems and the facts to the surface.

APPENDIX B

MAJOR PROGRAM TOPICS

1. Identifying the Emotional Handicapped and Behaviorally Disordered Student
2. Behavior Management in the Classroom
3. Instructional Techniques for use with the Emotionally Handicapped and Behaviorally Disordered Student.
4. Parent-School-Teacher Relationships
5. Competency Testing in New York State
6. Teaching the Speech or Language Impaired Adolescent
7. Reading Techniques for the Secondary Teacher
8. The Retarded Adolescent and Adult
9. Preparing the Learning Disabled Students for the State Competency Tests
10. The Law (PL 94-142) and its Future
11. Parent Teacher Relationships Revisited
12. Individual Education Plans
13. Instructional Strategies for the Secondary Learning Disabled Student
14. Evaluating and Reporting Classroom Behavior
15. Parents and Advocacy - A Panel
16. The Educational and Emotional Needs of the Physically Handicapped
17. Individuals with Handicapping Conditions - A Panel

FOOTNOTES

[1]B.O. Smith, et al., A Design for a School of Pedagogy, Washington, 1980, 5-6.

[2]Kenneth Howey, Richard Bents, and Dean Corrigan, eds., School-Focused Inservice: Descriptions and Discussion, Reston, Va., 1981, 7.

[3]New York State Education Department, "Draft Regulations to Implement the Regents Plan on Teaching as a Profession," Albany, NY, December, 1980, 29-31.

[4]Howey, et.al., 11.

[5]Winifred Warnat, "In-Service Education: Key to PL 94-142's Service to Handicapped Children and Youth," Educational Leadership, V. 35 (March, 1978), 474-479.

[6]Roy Anderson, et. al., "A Data Based Inservice Teacher Train'ng Model for Public School Systems," Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, V. 13 (April, 1978), 224.

[7]Alex Johnson, "The Effects of In-Service Training in Preparation for Mainstreaming," Journal of Special Education, V. 17 (Fall, 1980) 10-13.

[8]Pauline Grippin, "Multilevel Evaluation of a College Faculty Development Program Funded under Public Law 94-142," paper presented at the 1980 meeting of the Northeastern Educational Research Association, Ellenville, NY.

[9]Marilynne Boyle and Christine Sleeter, "Inservice for a Federally-Mandated Educational Change: A Study of PL 94-142," Journal of Research and Development in Education, V. 14 (Winter, 1981), 80

[10]Stephen Lansdowne and Peter Jennings, "A Levels of Involvement Approach to In-Service Training," The Personnel and Guidance Journal, V. 59 (Jan.1981), 275-278.

[11]Hall, Gene, "Facilitating Institutional Change Using the Individual as the Frame of Reference," In J. Grosenick & M. Reynolds (Eds.) Teacher Education: Renegotiating Roles for Mainstreaming, Minneapolis, 1978, 547-571.